

Washington, Feb 27 -

Madame Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of African-Americans in celebration of Black History Month. I find it quite fitting to address the House on this particular date when in 1869, John Menard, the first African-American elected to Congress, presented his case for being unfairly denied his seat as the representative for the second Congressional district of Louisiana. His testimony made him the first African-American to address Congress on the House floor.

Now almost 140 years later, we bear witness to the fruits of his labor by having 41 African-American members in the U.S. House and one African-American member in the U.S. Senate.

That's why I'm so proud to represent the First District of Iowa where in this great state we have created a legacy of diversity and our own mark in history.

Iowa is home to Lulu Johnson, the first African-American woman to receive a PhD. It is also home to twelve of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Iowa State University, my alma mater and George Washington Carver's, houses Jack Trice Stadium, the only Division 1-A football stadium to be named in honor of an African-American.

Iowa State also educated the current highest ranking African-American Health Policy Advisor in the U.S. House of Representatives, Mr. Aranthan Jones.

It's these types of accomplishments that inspire me to continue standing up for people of all backgrounds, fighting for justice, and working towards equality.

I yield the balance of my time.